

Waybill

Mid West Region NMRA –
Spring 2013



The WAYBILL

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The WAYBILL

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CONTRIBUTIONS

Articles, photographs and artwork are encouraged in either hardcopy or electronic form. The editor uses Quark 4.1 as his publishing software on a Mac. Word documents are also acceptable, but please send the photographs as an attachment. Copy is due by the 10th of February, May, August and November and should be sent to the editor at the above address. Submitted material will be returned upon request.

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Editor's Column

This issue, Dave Nelson presents an article on knife edge ballast. This is a topic I had never heard of, but of course seen photos of the immaculately maintained right of ways of the eastern lines, especially the Pennsy and NYC.

I remember reading that when the Michigan Central began running passenger trains into Chicago in the 1850's, the bragged that the ride was clean and dust-free, as they had planted there right of way with grass and it was kept as a lawn. I imagine once the ties began rotting away this practice was done away with and they returned to gravel along the right of way

i took the cover photo at the Hesston Steam Museum near Hesston Indiana last fall. What a great place to visit for the period modeler! Not only do they have narrow gauge steam trains, in this case Shay locomotive #7 built in 1929, but other gauges as well. Everyone from the Fox Valley Division that went had a blast riding the trains. In addition they had a parade of steam tractors, something I had never witnessed before and should not be missed.

Finally, I asked last issue without a response, so here goes again: Anyone with copies of the old SIG **Pickles in Miniature**, please contact me, the Editor:
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A Word About Constant Contact E-Mail

In mid February, the NMRA sent a test Constant Contact e-mail to members who have reported e-mail addresses to find out if the member's e-mail address is valid. In the near future, the NMRA plans to start sending an eBulletin to members. And, you will continue to receive e-mails through the Constant Contact system from the Midwest Region. Additionally, a few Divisions in the Region also use this communication tool.

Each Constant Contact e-mail includes links to update or unsubscribe your e-mail address. Please do not use these links. If you unsubscribe using the Constant Contact link, your e-mail address will be removed from the NMRA membership database, from the Midwest Region e-mail database and probably from your Division's records. If you get an e-mail that you don't want, just hit the delete key. While we don't yet know how many e-mails the NMRA will send in a year, the number sent by the Midwest Region will probably continue to be about a half dozen (four Waybill announcements and occasional news that may be of interest to members).

If you use the update link, your change may not be timely posted to the NMRA membership database. Instead, the NMRA has created a new way for you to update your personal information. See <http://www.nmra.org/member/content/member-info-update>.

If you have any questions about the Midwest Region's use of Constant Contact, please feel free to e-mail me at: mwrsecy@mwr-nmra.org.
- Bert Lattan

Congratulations to the newly elected Midwest Region officials, and a thank you to those who took the time to vote:

President	Paul Mangan
Vice President	Mike Yurjec
Director at large	Jim Allen
	David Leider MMR
	Linda Sukup

They will be installed at the MWR board of directors meeting on May 5 in Indianapolis

Next Board Meeting

**Marriott Hotel
Indianapolis, Indiana**

May 5, 2013; 9:00 am

President's Report

By Bill Litkenhous, President, MWR

I am sitting at my computer on a wonderful winter day with the sun shining brightly and the temperature in the mid forties putting together my sixteenth and final President's Report. The membership has read my ramblings and personal remembrances in my reports and I hope that you have enjoyed them. The weather here in the Southeastern corner of the region is a lot more enjoyable than what is occurring in the northeastern part of our wonderful country. If you had electricity it would be great modeling conditions, but unfortunately all too many of our citizens are in the cold and dark. We have been lucky here with a cold but moderate winter so far.

This has been an eventful period since my last letter. In late October I had a minor mishap at my house. I had a fall and my wife Sunny decided that I needed to be seen by my doctor because of my apparent instability, physical, that is, not mental. She was going to drive me to New Albany, IN to the emergency room at Floyd Memorial Hospital where my doctor was that day. I agreed and got dressed to go and instead of waiting in the house as she had instructed, I went to the car and tried to get in. This was a bad mistake, as I fell again and landed on the concrete garage floor with my right leg wedged under the car door. I was wedged so tightly that even with Sunny's help I could not get up. So for the second time that morning we had to call 911 to rescue me. After getting up and into the car Sunny got me to the emergency room. There they poked and prodded me and did all sorts of x-rays and scans to determine if there was anything wrong with me. I spent 3 days in the hospital and I was diagnosed to have Parkinson's disease which was causing some instability. I was given some medication to control the tremors I was experiencing and was prescribed to have a month's worth of physical rehab. It apparently helped because I am now able to get around much better.

One of my major projects that I managed to get completed was getting my Monon Railroad crossing signal

Photo of the Monon Railroad crossing signal at the entrance to my train room.



moved from my old home in Bedford to its new location adjacent to the entrance of my train building. Now all I have left to do is to get it wired up and flashing, something that I did not get done in Bedford. This picture shows the location outside of the building.

The first weekend of January the GTE show was in Indianapolis and I went in on Sunday to assist with the Central Indiana Division booth. We had several displays set up for visitor's information, including a slide show and an N scale layout. We also had a small switching layout set up for interested individuals, especially young children to try their hand at switching. The layout had a main track with two spur tracks to move the cars from and then assemble a train on the main track. There was a toggle switch set up for controlling the locomotive. It was a center off switch with a spring loaded toggle to move the locomotive either left or right. There was an engine and four cars to work with. We had four cards with a picture corresponding to each one of the cars on the layout. The operator would draw three cards from the stack. The cards were set on the table in the order that they were drawn and then the operator was to assemble the train with the cars in the order that matched the cards. We had kids of all ages try their hand at switching. I had one mother walk up with two kids. Her son did a good job switching the cars. Her daughter showed an interest in running the train but her mother said she was too young. I asked her how old was her daughter and she responded three. I then told her that our age limit was from two to ninety nine. So she let her daughter try and with a little assistance she did very well. This display was well received as can be seen in this picture.

Photo of family operating the CID switching layout. Jim Shelhaus supervising.



The weather has cooperated with the construction of the addition to the Salem Depot Railroad Museum. It has been interesting watching the progress from ground breaking to near completion. We have been doing some of the work ourselves to help keep the costs down. The Depot crew painted the boards for the exterior and stained the wood for the interior trim. Within the next month the

building should be ready for occupancy. The main reason for the addition was to house the Monon Railroad Historical and Technical Societies headquarters and achieves. The Depot crew's next major project will be cleaning the model railroad layout as the construction has created a lot of dust that is a hindrance to smooth running of the trains.

A reminder that Mile Post 50, the Spring convention, is coming up in May. Don't forget to send in your registration soon if you have not already done so.

Also for your forward planning, the National Convention for 2016 has been awarded to Indianapolis, IN. More information will follow.

Since this is my final letter, I will leave you with the view from my front porch on one of our wonderful evenings lately.

Bill Litkenhous

View from the front of my house on a beautiful evening.



Frugal Modeler - By Dave Nelson



Some months ago in the Model Railroader magazine online forum (where I post as "dknelson"), a modeler named Val Danos, writing under his forum name "Bearman," recounted his difficulties and frustrations at achieving a clean, knife-like edge for his ballast. He had tried applying ballast with a line of masking tape parallel to the track, but, in his words, "Masking tape does not work very well since the alcohol and the glue/water mixture

sometimes seeps under it bringing along some of the ballast. Also, when you pull the tape up, some of the hardened ballast comes up as well, sometimes requiring a little touch up and sometimes a lot."

Val's posting generated a number of suggestions about good ballasting techniques, but it became clear to me that the other modelers were seemingly unaware of what he was actually trying to achieve. "Knife-edged ballast" refers to the perfectly clean, straight line for the edge of the ballast, a "manicured" look one sees in classic old photos of rights of way, particularly in the east and south, prototypical for the "golden age" steam era into the early diesel era. Sometimes one also sees in old photos that the subroadbed, presumably cinders, was also spread to a clean knife-edge.



The prototype photos shown here illustrate the effect, a product of a time when labor was cheap and there was a public relations element to the immaculate physical appearance of a railroad's right-of-way.

I had two ideas that I contributed. I thought Val's idea of masking tape (or perhaps even duct tape) placed at the line, then pulled away when the ballast glue has set and hardened, should indeed give a clean line, with a slight ridge, which in turn would be where the contrasting scenery would begin. I was rather surprised to hear this did not work well for him. Burnishing the tape would prevent ballast from seeping under it, and I suggested using a utility knife to cut a clean straight line where ballast and glue met the edge of the tape before pulling up the tape would eliminate pulling up ballast with it.

My other idea was to use a "sacrificial" half of a piece of regular cork roadbed, butted with the flat edge becoming a sort of "wall" or dam at the desired straight line. The cork would need to be thoroughly pinned or nailed in place until the ballast hardens, then pulled away (and presumably, reused). To avoid tearing away some of the hardened ballast, it again seemed to me that following the "wall" edge with a utility knife blade before tearing it away would create the desired clean line.

I had never tried either of these ideas at the time. Val, writing as Bearman, responded that he would give the cord roadbed/utility knife idea a shot, and a few days later posted: "The sacrificial piece of cork roadbed works. To avoid under-creep of the glue/water mixture it has to be pinned every 1/2 inch or so. I have also used full strength glue on the shoulder and am contemplating a combination of both: pin down the roadbed, apply the full strength glue, add the ballast and pull up the road bed before the glue has dried entirely."



Above: The author is cutting the edge with a utility knife. Below: Once peeled away, he has his "knife edge" ballast seam.



The author's experimental section. Cork roadbed on left held in place with "T" pins and duct tape on the other.



Below: The finished work
All photos by the author

The photos show my experiment with an old 3 foot piece of Atlas flex track on cork roadbed, trying both the burnished tape and the pinned or nailed piece of cork roadbed ideas. In both cases I followed my own advice and cut a clean line with a utility knife before pulling up the tape or unpinning and pulling away the cork. I did not try Val's idea of using pure glue where the ballast meets the edge but used my normal soaking of thinned matte medium or Woodland Scenic's Scenic Cement. To show the actual knife edge look I added some elemental scenic treatment along the ballast, showing both vegetation. I also tried to capture the look, seen in older photos of "manicured" ballast, of a line of cinder subroadbed beneath the ballast and extending beyond it.

There is nothing special or even particularly "frugal" about either the ballasting or the scenic treatment but because knife-edged ballast is an effect rarely seen on even steam-era model railroads, it seems worth passing along a couple of ideas that now can both be said to actually work.



Upcoming meetings:

Spring 2013 Convention, including the Annual Meeting of Members and the Spring Board Meeting. May 2-5, 2013
More information above

Fall 2013 Board Meeting- to be determined

Spring 2014 Convention, including the Annual Meeting of Members and the Spring Board Meeting Schaumburg, Illinois. May 16-18, 2014

Region News

Midwest Region Achievement Program Report by Marvin Preussler MMR- MWR AP Manager

I am happy to report that there has been some activity from our members. Members continue to take part in the Achievement Program all over the Midwest Region. It is always fun to help answer questions and to guide our members in the AP. Take a look at the following:

The following members received **AP Certificates**:

John Mann, MMR	Cherry Valley, IL	Official
David E. Allen	Marquette, MI	Structures

With the winter here, there will probably be more activity in the AP than these past few months. There are plenty of train shows going on in the winter and spring to get one motivated. So get going on those modeling projects and take a look at the NMRA website, to see what you may qualify for and set a goal. Hopefully you will be able to bring what you have completed for the contest to the Midwest Region meet in spring.

As always, work with your division Achievement Program Manager first, and if there is a problem, feel free to contact me. Thanks!

Marvin Preussler, MMR - MWR AP Manager



Region Convention Update:

We are progressing along nicely with our MILE-POST 50 convention planning. Our newest developments include the prototype tours that we will be providing for some of our convention attendees and also our Saturday

Evening Banquet Program. Each prototype tour will be limited to only 40 attendees as we will be guests of these important and vital railroad businesses and we do not want to interfere or disrupt their places of work.

On Thursday, May 2nd in the morning we will tour the offices of the Indiana Rail Road and have an opportunity to see President and CEO, Thomas Hoback's Business Car, which was the former Santa Fe Business Car #56. This car has been completely refurbished and has been used on both the Indiana Rail Road and elsewhere with AMTRAK throughout the United States. We will also see Mr. Hoback's 1930's era Santa Fe El Capitan lounge car which has much of the original trim and seating along with a beverage bar. We will tour the Indiana Railroad executive office, which is a faithful reproduction of a typical Santa



Above: Local Santa Fe train coming into Joliet on Tom Cain's layout

Right N&W Y3 at coaling tower on Matt Hewitt's layout

Below: Steam and diesel on Warner Clark's layout

See these and more on at the convention



Fe rural passenger depot. This facility has many appropriate era railroad travel posters and art that was used to promote rail travel in the golden years of railroad passenger travel. We will also see the remote control operation of locomotives in their railroad yard. The Indiana Rail Road was one of the first US Rail roads to use remote control of locomotives.

Our second prototype tour is of the AMTRAK Big Four maintenance shops in Beech Grove Indiana on Saturday morning, May 4th. This tour is full, but you can still express interest in this tour as we will keep a waiting list in case anyone who is signed up cancels. Convention attendees will transport themselves to the sites of these tours, but they will be required to report to the convention hotel first to receive maps to these sites along with the credentials to attend these tours.

Our speaker for the Saturday evening banquet will be President and CEO of the Indiana Rail Road, Thomas Hoback. Mr. Hoback has been a driving force in making the Indiana Rail Road a thriving local railroad business that reaches from Indianapolis, to Evansville, Indiana to Chicago, Illinois and more. Mr Hoback will speak on the "Past, the Present, and the Future of the Indiana Railroad."

Right now on the website we have 16 of our scheduled clinics planned and at this time, we are still getting calls from some who have an interest in doing a clinic. Check out the website to see if more are planned. We have 24 layouts planned for tours with tours available all four days that the convention is in session. Check out photos on the webpage for most of these layouts along with descriptions of the layouts.

We will have a train show with dealers of new and used trains. Persons registered for the MILEPOST 50 convention will get an early-bird opportunity to enter the train show.

Please go to our MILEPOST 50 Website for the most up to date information on the convention:
<http://cid.railfan.net/MP50.html>

The Central Indiana Division has secured the Bid to host the NMRA National Convention in Indianapolis in 2016. Our MILEPOST 50 Regional Convention is a blue-print and scaled down version that will show the potential of the 2016 Convention. Check us out !

See page 18, 19 and 20 of the Waybill for more information.

I did not have room for all of Dave Johnson's survey in the last issue. so here it is in its entirety

Director-At-Large Survey

by M. David Johnson

In the Summer 2012 issue of the Waybill, I asked three questions (and received 11 responses):

Question 1. What are your ideas for programs and events which will draw us together without costing an arm and a leg? Jim Osborn of the Fox Valley Division has suggested the idea of holding a one-day mini-con instead of the traditional 3-day convention. How do you feel about that?

Representative Responses:

We should not make the Region convention into a Division meet. We should keep the 2-1/2 day format.

Cost and travel for a convention, especially one that is on the rim of the MWR makes it tough. Also, the average 70 year old isn't too keen on driving expressways, interstates, or at night. My suggestion for the region would be to look first for an adequate hall or facility and let the members find their own room. You'd be surprised how many people could care less where they sleep!

Sometimes the old ways have to change. There are ways like a three way meet (like the one in Madison in May) to mix with other divisions.

To me it already is a one day convention with the main stuff happening on Saturday and Friday is optional. I don't know how much time could be cut out of an already short schedule.

Yes, a shorter convention will likely draw larger attendance, but gas cost is likely the same for most for either a 1- or 3-day convention. Given the size of MWR, it may make more sense to do a 2-day convention as another option, which would cut lodging costs in half for many attendees, but still make a longer travel distance worthwhile.

I believe that a one day convention sounds good to the local/host group. People traveling more than two hours driving, will probably still want to stay overnight. If the convention starts at 9:00, a two hour drive plus getting ready would mean getting up at probably 5:00. If you stay for evening activities which probably end somewhere between 8:00 and 10:00, you are looking at the two hour drive plus being tired from getting up early and you would get home after midnight, that's a long day. With the average age of the members being over 60 this also will have an effect on attendees. With that said, if you decide to stay overnight there should be something to do Friday and possibly on Sunday, this gets us back to the old format: A convention starting Friday afternoon/evening and running into Sunday; on Friday evening, operating sessions and clinics. Layout tours could be on either/both Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning and afternoon.

I would hate to see MWR convention go to a one day format. We have a region which is relatively large geographically so driving to a convention can easily take half a day or longer for some members. If we are to appeal to members who are not retired, we have to expect that many of them cannot head for convention before Friday night, and will need to head back home after lunch Sunday or by mid-afternoon. I think Friday activities

should still not convene any earlier than afternoon even for those who are retired. Above all, every attempt should be made to reduce costs so the registration and lodging costs are not the main factor for deciding whether or not to attend a convention.

I have pondered the 3-day vs. the 1-day mini con and I still come down on the side of the 3-day event. The reason being if we want to include the people on the edges of the region it will still take long driving hours for these folks to get there if they are coming from the lower part of Indiana to Northern Wisconsin. Even if you have the mini con in the middle (Chicago area) it can still be a long haul. These folks would have to drive in the night before and stay overnight as to not miss anything in the morning + a long drive home and again another night in a motel.

I think the region should be more involved in helping the divisions with the conventions and not just awarding them the convention and put them on their own. The divisions will still have final say in the end, of course, but advice can be helpful. We also need to sell the conventions. A region Board or Committee member should attend division meets to do just that to show the value in attending these events. I think I would rather see the main focus placed on Value for the dollar spent as a way of increasing attendance.

Ironically, our board discussions have circled back to the Friday night, Saturday and Sunday MWR convention format. We will try to locate the event at a banquet hall or something like that (such as the CNW Historical Society does in Elgin) – nothing fancy – no specific hotel, just a good space to control costs. Modeling with the Masters: Hard to figure out how to organize this. National had some clinics that were limited in attendance at the last conventions. They were always sold out. Maybe we need to do more at the local level? Pay \$30-\$40 and build a building, circuit, etc. with a master and take it home.

I believe the role of the region should be one of assistance and facilitator. Not necessarily doer for the divisions. We should have frameworks for the divisions to build off of; Central Services in some cases - Web site, convention know how and data.

A one day event might be difficult for those that have to travel a long way - two days would be better for most folks.

Conclusion: The Fox Valley Division has decided to continue with the 3-day convention for 2014, but will be actively exploring ways to hold the costs down for the benefit of those who will be attending.

Question 2. What are your ideas for how we can increase interest in model railroading in general, and enhance membership in the NMRA and the MWR in particular?

Representative Responses:

Each Division should have someone leading recruitment, and not necessarily recruiting kids. We need to get those guys 45-65 on board. That's the group which has the disposable income and time. The problem for the NMRA is there are so many factions in the hobby and groups who are not maybe organized as well, but give many of the non-NMRA modelers a way to share ideas, etc. Most of it via text or web. In that regard we fall way behind.

Unlike some people, I don't see "model railroading as a dying hobby for a bunch of old guys". If anything, as the baby boomers begin to retire, we have a great opportunity to bring many of them back into the hobby. So one thing I think the MWR might consider is a program to reach these soon to be retired potential modelers.

One thing SCWD has done for number of years in a row is to hold what we call a "Rail School" every January. We promote it at all the local hobby shops, and even do limited mailings to those who have attended out previous year's annual model rail show and sale (we do every February). Our rationale is to encourage all those who bought train sets at Christmas and learn more about the hobby.

The MWR should probably get a Facebook page. Digital technology has invaded our hobby and will only do so even more I believe. This message has not been communicated to the younger generation, probably because too many of us "old guys" are just struggling to understand it ourselves. I think the hobby as a whole from the NMRA down has failed to communicate how digital the hobby has become.

Staffing an NMRA/Division booth at train shows is a must. Passing out literature about the local division and NMRA can work as well as anything else. The important thing is to put on a friendly face and convince the people we talk with that model railroading is fun.

Recently I was convinced that there is not a waning interest in trains. What changed my mind are the statistics of the WGH show. They drew 33,000 folks for a two day event at the SMB convention center. They spent \$100k+ in advertising to get the word out and got the draw. We spend \$8k in advertising to get 4625 attendees for our HW show. As far as membership goes, our audience is not



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kids. It is good to get them acquainted and interested, but they will not make the NMRA whole. It is as Tony K said, the 50-55 year olds that want to rekindle the hobby – and probably are not yet not craftsman – that are our target.

Youth education could include the scout merit badge program and similar. My opinion is that the program is poorly managed. We should be developing broad ties at the management level with youth orientated organizations – not the hodgepodge we have at the local level. I have tried several times to get the BSA involved with make and take programs – we had only one hit is 7 years. What about other youth orgs? GSA, church groups?, etc. I think if there were corporate ties with goals and initiatives, we could make this work as a trickle down rather than a rope push.

Conclusions: The consensus of the respondents seems to be that we need to be attracting 45 to 65 year-olds, not just kids. Promoting the hobby is continuing through venues such as the SCWD Rail School and NMRA/Division booths at train shows and Division meets, stressing that Model Railroading is Fun!

I, myself, would like to see a greater availability of hands-on events at Division and other meets. Make-and-Take model building seminars might be one such. And micro-sized switching layouts along the lines of John Allen's Timesaver (cf. November 1972 Model Railroader) might be another.

Question 3. What is your opinion concerning these two vacancies (Education Coordinator and Estate Counseling Chair)? Should the MWR actively pursue filling these positions? Should it simply leave them vacant until someone expresses interest in filling them? Or, should it abolish these two positions?

Representative Responses:

Since the Education position is required by National, we can't eliminate it. I think we should eliminate the Estate Counseling position. Another Region level position that is not functioning is Non-Rail. I think we should make non-rail a local option just like the auction and eliminate both positions from the Region Bylaws.

I am not sure a MWR Estate person is required, but I am not opposed to having someone if someone wants the job. Based on what I have seen locally in the past five years, most members are not planning or perhaps even thinking about what will happen to their layout or collection when they die. In fact, most don't even have inventories of their stuff for insurance purposes I suspect.

The Education chair could be combined with any of these positions you talk about. I am in the yahoo group beta test site for education in the NMRA. It's a bit of a think tank that started out small and is growing. Again, this shows how many ideas people have about doing things in this hobby to better it for everyone. The achievement pro-

gram chair could have this position added to the AP chair position and set up a committee to manage it. Each division should have an estate counselor.

Estate counseling: I have tried to help many a family deal with the disposition of a past modelers stuff. Not easy. It takes an enormous amount of time and energy to get any money in return; Item by item, on eBay, train shows, etc. Most widows or family do not want to deal with this. My latest recommendation is now, donate it to the BSA (we have a local name to help with that) and get a receipt for a tax write-off. Family is happy for tax reasons and simplicity – and gets rid of the stuff – BSA gives the stuff to interested and needy kids; Win-win. Key factor is old plastic and brass is of little value by today's standards. Occasionally there is a rare brass piece. I advise selling brass on consignment at one of the big brass houses; Brass trains.com or Caboose Hobbies in Denver. They have a following and a web site. They also can effectively price it. This administrator should create a set of guidelines along my experiences and get it published on our web site and direct folks in need to it. Then we have done our job. We should not make this bigger than it is to scrape up a few pennies. In the end the widows are really happy to just get rid of the stuff! One of the DAL's could do this as an assignment.

As you said, many of the Education chair responsibilities are covered by other folks and adding another layer of "management" seems unnecessary. If the NMRA has failed to appoint someone to that position for the MWR - let's just leave well enough alone and abolish the position of Education Chair.

The position of MWR Estate Counseling Chair, which is currently vacant, should be filled.

Conclusion: At the 9/16 MWR Board of Directors Meeting, I was appointed as the Region's Education Coordinator. (I guess that'll teach me to open my big mouth!) This now also includes representing the Region on the new NMRA Education and Training Committee.

Other Comments in response to DAL Survey:

Re: Contests - I have gotten screwed by being the only entrant in some categories, taking first place and moving from novice to master just because there was no competition. I think the novice to master transition should be when I get a merit award. The judging criteria are tougher in the Master category.

Re: Convention Dates - I think a problem with the past convention was the early date of the convention. People that I talked with did not want to book the early March convention with a possible weather issue and later they just forgot or lost interest in attending the convention. I believe that if you check the convention regulations it states that the convention will be held sometime between April and August.

Re: Perceptions - I guess my overall view is that at the division level the MWR is perceived as something that is mainly for "advanced modelers", i.e., those who have been in the hobby and NMRA for many years, those who are active in the AP program and are seeking to become MMRs, and those who aspire to ultimately become involved at the national NMRA level.

Final Thought: Once again, "Model Railroading is Fun!"
Let's keep pursuing that fun.

M. David Johnson, Director-At-Large
mdj@bds-soft.com

**Annual Meeting
of Members**

**Marriott Hotel
Indianapolis, Indiana**

9:00 pm, Saturday, May 4, 2013

The Fox Valley Division and the Dupage Division alternately man a booth at the Wheaton Model Railroad show on the 2nd Sunday of each month. Jim Allen and Mike Hirvela realized that they had nothing to hand to people describing who we are and what we do. They brought up the idea of a brochure to the Fox Valley Board and


several board members worked on something suitable, with input from the WISE and SCWD divisions. Jim Osborn, our publicity guru, did the design

The resulting product is a trifold, 4-color brochure. I have reproduced a portion of it below and the following page.

Meetings:

Generally Fox Valley Division meetings are held monthly on the 3rd Sunday from September through May at the:


Gary Morava Recreation Center
110 W. Camp McDonald Road
Prospect Heights, IL 60070




The FVD usually meets from 1:30-4:30 p.m.; however, times and schedule can vary, so check our web site posting for the very latest information.

Meetings typically include: social & hobby networking, local & national items of note, how-to demonstrations of modeling techniques or a featured informational session, a model contest, occasional layout tours, refreshments and a drawing for a free NMRA membership.

The division's **Annual Train Show** features 28,000 sq. feet of running trains, train related activities, history and merchandise. This event is designed to promote all aspects of the hobby to Chicagoland families. The show operates the 1st weekend in March at the Harper College Sports Facility in Palatine, IL.





For more information visit:
www.highwheelertrainshow.com




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If you are looking for answers to any of these questions then the Fox Valley Division of the NMRA is for you.

Who Are We?

The Fox Valley Division is a local chapter of the NMRA. The more than 40 year old, non-profit organization is incorporated in the State of Illinois and has over 200 members, all of whom share an appreciation of the hobby and of railroads in general.



Members come from all walks of life and include people of all ages. Not all members have a model railroad layout. Some just enjoy building models or doing historical research or helping with a friend's layout. Others are rail fans and photographers who enjoy watching real trains; still others are into a combination all of the above.

Members' home layouts vary in size, scope and design. Some build "modules" that interconnect with other modelers' modules to form larger layouts. The scale of the track and equipment range from (smallest) "Z" to "G" (garden railroads). Some depict realistic prototype railroads, and others represent "freelanced" or fantasy railroads, created through the imagination of the modelers.

The Promo Railroad

by M. David Johnson

Round and round and... round. Your eyes begin to glaze over as the little train makes yet another circuit around the circle of track. What now?

Model railroading is fun! But, the fun only really begins to grow when you expand that first little circle into something more complex and challenging.

For some, train watching is what they enjoy most in model railroading. For them, a longer mainline, running through different kinds of scenery and terrain, may be the path to greater fun.

For others, model building is their greatest source of enjoyment. For them, a larger circle or oval of track, with a few switches and spurs, may provide the needed room to add buildings, bridges, and an increasing collection of newly-built freight and passenger cars.

For me though, and for many others like me, our

greatest fun in model railroading comes from operating trains the way the prototype railroads do. I'm basically an HO (Armchair) Model Railroader. What does that mean? Well, for me, it means I model in HO scale; I have lots of locomotives, cars, track, building kits, and scenery materials; but I have no layout! I operate on OPL (Other People's Layouts).

I have lots of plans. Over the past 50 years, I must have drawn up at least 25 different layout plans. I even built a couple of them. But I tore them down after a short period, and I haven't had a layout for almost 30 years. Several factors (including a sprinkling of self-disgust) encouraged me to finally get out of my armchair and build something!!! So, I set myself a challenge: Design an operating model railroad which could be built for no more than \$500. This is not a small trick if you intend to concentrate on prototype operations. The Promo Railroad is my shot at that target.

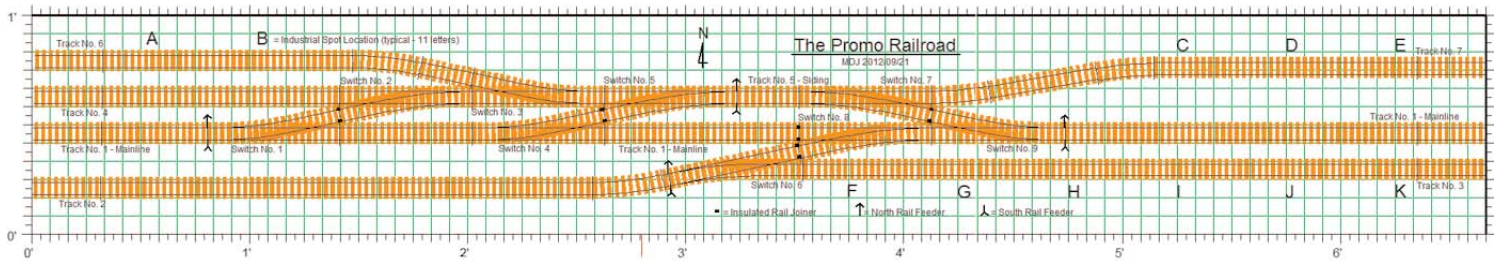


Figure 1: The Promo Railroad Layout

Specifics:

- Scale: HO (1:87.1)
- Size: 12" x 80"
- Prototype: Freelanced
- Mainline Run: 76"
- Min. Radius: 18"
- Min. Turnout: PECO Small Radius
- Max. Grade: None
- Benchwork: Hollow Core Door on table, sawhorses, cabinet, floor, or wherever
- Height: Varies with benchwork
- Roadbed: None
- Track: Code 100 flextrack + Snaptrack bumpers
- Scenery: None
- Backdrop: None
- Control: DC power pack – only one train

I call it the Promo Railroad because I also plan to use it to promote the hobby, i.e. to interest others in model railroading by taking the layout to club meetings, train shows, and other such venues. It's small and portable, and well-suited to that task. At this point, it occurred to me that others might find some of these ideas useful too. So, here's what I did:

Think of a major railroad. At some point along its mainline, a track branches off and heads towards a small town a few miles away. Each day (or maybe only once or twice a week) a small train heads out from the junction and travels along that branchline to serve the industries in that small town. The Promo Railroad layout represents the trackage in that small town.

Now picture this: The train has just arrived in town. You're the conductor and engineer of that train. It's your job to perform all the necessary switching in the town and then assemble the train, ready to head back out of town to that junction with the mainline.

The genesis of my idea for this layout goes back to the November 1972 issue of Model Railroader magazine, where John Allen introduced his famous "Timesaver" switching puzzle. (In 1676, Sir Isaac Newton wrote, "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants"). I took half of John's Timesaver, enlarged it from his 10" x 56" to my 12" x 80", and added two additional spurs. This makes it work more like a functional small-town yard, and less like just a puzzle.

I began construction by purchasing a 24" x 80" hol-

low-core bifold door. I then removed the hinges and used one of the two separate 12" x 80" doors for the layout, setting the other door aside for future expansion. Such expansion would involve removing the bumper at the east end of the layout's mainline, and extending the mainline onto the second door (and perhaps beyond). You can do this now, if you wish, but that would run the cost up above the \$500 limit. It's also better to get one part of the layout running smoothly before venturing forth into new territory.

I gave my door a coat of paint, but you don't have to. If you don't have any suitable paint available, note that buying such paint would also run the cost up over \$500. I also added little shoes to the underside at each corner to keep the under-layout wiring from rubbing on any table or cabinet the layout will be sitting on. This would also violate the cost limit, so you could just use scrap pieces of wood instead, or even just use four books under the corners.

Next, I laid the track directly on the hollow-core door, using Liquid Nails Clear for Small Projects. (Part of this project includes purchasing a basic train set. The train set's EZ Track should be all set aside for future use – it's not used in this layout). You can use whatever glue you have handy in your tool box (test its hold between track and door first), or you can use some of the Walthers Goo which is included in this project's Table of Materials and Price List. Be sure not to get any glue on the turnout points or throwbars (please don't be so rude as to ask me how I learned this).

I chose PECO's Electrofrog Small Radius Turnouts for this layout. The "Small Radius" configuration and dimensions don't conform to normal U.S. numerical turnout specifications (e.g. #4, #6, etc.), but they have the advantage of saving space; a crucial factor with a layout this small. I also like PECO's positive-locking, over-center spring, throw mechanism; and their rugged construction – both advantageous for a portable layout, which can be expected to suffer a few knocks and bruises along the way. All turnouts are hand-thrown – no switch machines, ground throws, or switch stands are required.

I chose the Electrofrog model because its solid metal frog minimizes problems with short-wheelbase locomotives. If you prefer the Insulfrog model, that's fine: the Walthers.com price is currently the same either way.

I didn't use any roadbed under the track because this layout represents a small-town yard where the tracks wouldn't be elevated by ballast. You could go ahead and

add a complete 12" x 80" layer of roadbed material, or you could add a layer of pink or blue extruded Styrofoam. This would help deaden extraneous noise, but it would also exceed the \$500 cost limit, and would make the layout somewhat less conveniently portable.

You can wire the entire layout as one single electrical block and connect it directly to the train set's power pack. For each of the feeders, drill a big enough hole through the door to run a cocktail straw (I used one from Collins). Solder the feeder to the rail joiner, run it down through the straw, and then remove the straw. To insure maintained electrical continuity, I also recommend soldering the rail joints together wherever an insulated rail joiner isn't used – rail expansion won't be a problem on a layout this small.

You should place a mark (or some sort of stop) on your power pack at something at or a bit less than 10 scale miles per hour to keep maximum operating speeds down to what would be reasonable for local switching operations. This will allow you to compare your performance from one operating session to the next by simply keeping track of the time it takes to do all the specified switching moves.

Wiring the entire layout as one electrical block would also make the wiring ready to use with a DCC system, should you decide to invest in one in the future. I strongly favor DCC for a switching layout like this, because it gives you a far finer degree of control over the slow-speed characteristics of model locomotives. Slow-speed operations are an absolute must for a small switching layout like this one.

DCC is not specified here because it would increase the project cost by about an additional \$300, but it's certainly worthwhile to consider it for a future enhancement. If you do anticipate using DCC at any point in the future though, don't fasten the Electrofrog turnouts to the door or to the other track too permanently – you may need to take them back up to make some electrical modifications. See, for example:

http://www.wiringfordcc.com/switches_peco.htm

However, I find the Peco turnouts generally pretty forgiving – I didn't make these modifications and the layout is working fine under DCC without them. I even ran my 4-8-4 through them as a test without any problem. Your mileage may vary.

#

The train itself consists of an inexpensive train set and some additional used cars to be purchased at a swap meet, train show, or other similar venue. All the cars are to be modified to improve their operating characteristics. More expensive and operations-ready equipment could be purchased instead, but once again, the additional cost would run us over budget.

First of all, none of the cars will be likely to meet

the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Recommended Practice RP-20.1 for Car Weight. In HO, this would be 1 ounce + 0.5 ounce per inch of car length (actual model length, not scale length). Having the correct car weights is critical to smooth switching operations.

The least expensive way to bring the cars up to recommended weight is with pennies. That's right, pennies. A penny weighs 0.1 ounce, so there are ten pennies to an ounce. Ten cents per ounce is way below the price for commercial lead weights.

Use the Walthers Goo to attach the pennies inside the cars. This works well with boxcars, reefers, and other closed cars, but you may have to experiment with open cars like flatcars and gondolas to figure out where to glue the pennies without ruining the cars' appearances.

Next, replace any plastic wheelsets on the cars with new metal wheelsets, and replace any old horn-hook type couplers with new Kadee No. 5 couplers (or equivalent). Uncoupling is to be performed manually using a small wooden stick with a sharpened end; something similar to a bamboo skewer.

There are no structures or scenery on the Promo Railroad: all those things are left to the imagination in order to keep the costs within the specified limit. You can certainly add such items in the future. The eleven (A-K) switching locations can simply be marked on the hollow core door with a Sharpie (or equivalent) marking pen. You can also use small post-it notes (or similar) to place markers on the tops of the cars to show where they are to be delivered. There are just a few simple rules for making this work:

1. A car marked with an "A" is to be delivered to location "A", etc. (A-K).
2. If a car is marked with an "A", etc., and is already at location "A", etc., when the train arrives in town; that car may be moved, but it must be back in location "A", etc., when the train is ready to leave town (A-K).
3. A car marked with a "T" must be in the train when it's ready to leave town.
4. Some cars may need to be moved from one location in town to another location in town.

What kind of industry spots letters A-K represent is entirely up to you. Whether cars can move from one spot to another, or whether they must all move either in or out on the train is also up to you. And, finally, which cars go where is also up to you, and can vary that from train-to-train as you see fit.

That being said, it's helpful to have a few standard (for you) scenarios to choose from on a regular basis, so you can compare your performance from one operating session to the next. One such scenario you might like to try is:

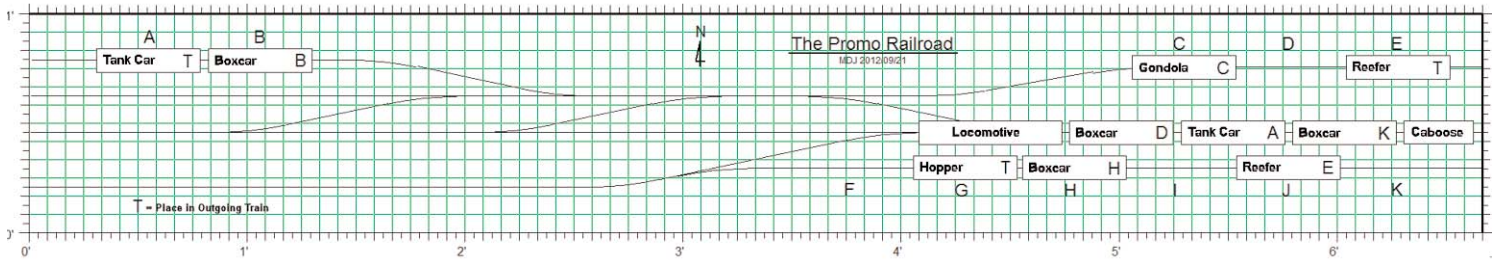


Figure 2: The Incoming Train

In this scenario, spots A and B are at an Oil and Gas Distributor. Spot A is the bulk terminal. Only tank cars may be spotted at spot A. Spot B is the warehouse. Only boxcars and perhaps an occasional flatcar or gondola may be spotted at spot B.

Spot C is a Farm Machinery Distributor. Boxcars, flatcars, and gondolas are allowed at spot C.

Spot D is the local Newspaper plant. Only boxcars and perhaps an occasional flatcar or gondola may be spotted at spot D.

Spot E is the Ice House. Only reefers are allowed to be spotted at the Ice House. Reefers can be pre-iced before delivery elsewhere in town for loading, and they can also be top-iced at the Ice House after being loaded elsewhere in town and before being placed in an outgoing train.

Spot F is a Fruit Loading Shed. Only reefers and perhaps an occasional boxcar, flatcar, or gondola may be spotted at spot F.

Spot G is a Sand and Gravel Company. Only hoppers and perhaps an occasional boxcar, flatcar, or gondola may be spotted at spot G.

Spot H and I are at a Transfer Warehouse. Only boxcars and perhaps occasional flatcars or gondolas are allowed at spots H and I.

Spot J is a Vegetable Loading Shed. Only reefers and perhaps an occasional boxcar, flatcar, or gondola may be spotted at spot F.

Spot K is the Team Track. Any car may be spotted at spot K.

Also in this scenario, the incoming train has just arrived in town on the mainline, with the locomotive leading and the caboose at the east end of the mainline. The train contains a boxcar for the Newspaper Plant (D), a tankcar for the Oil and Gas Distributor (A), and a boxcar for the Team Track (K).

Currently in town:

The tankcar at the Oil and Gas Distributor (A) is to be placed in the outgoing train.

The boxcar at the Oil and Gas Distributor (B) can be moved as needed, but must be back at spot B when the outgoing train is ready to leave town.

The gondola at the Farm Machinery Distributor (C) can be moved as needed, but must be back at spot C when the outgoing train is ready to leave town.

The reefer at the Ice House (E) is to be placed in the outgoing train.

The hopper at the Sand and Gravel Company (G) is to be placed in the outgoing train.

The boxcar at the Transfer Warehouse (H) can be moved as needed, but must be back at spot H when the outgoing train is ready to leave town.

The reefer at the Vegetable Loading Shed (J) has completed loading and is to be moved to the Ice House (E) for top icing.

Oh, a couple of more rules:

5. The outgoing train is not ready to leave town until the locomotive is at the east end of the mainline and the caboose is on the west end of the train.

6. Tankcars, to or from the Oil and Gas Distributor (A), are hazardous shipments. As such, if there are at least two cars in the outgoing train which are not such tankcars, then the tankcar must not be next to either the locomotive

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or to the caboose. If there is only one car in the outgoing train which is not such a tankcar, then the tankcar must not be next to the caboose.

After all the switching moves are complete, one resulting arrangement with the outgoing train ready to leave town would be:

yard for my new Alameda Belt Line layout (now in the final planning stages).

Don't let yourself be hamstrung by the plans. Don't hesitate to make little changes if the result works better for you.

Happy Railroading!

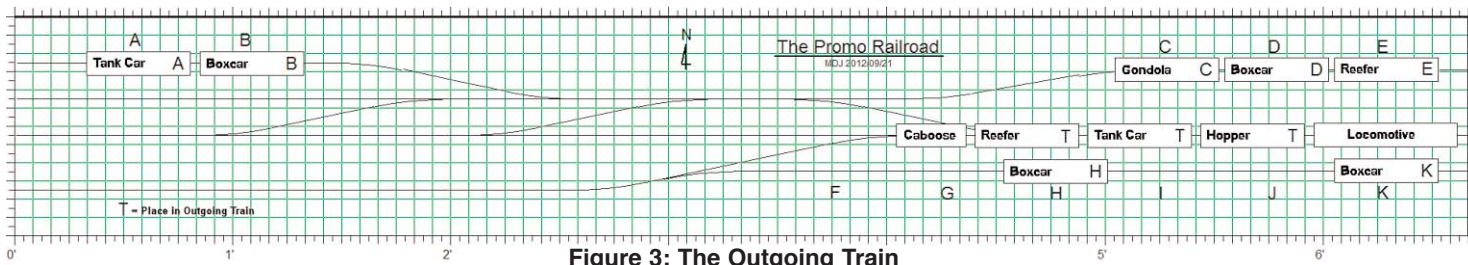


Figure 3: The Outgoing Train

Here's the Promo Railroad as I actually put it together:

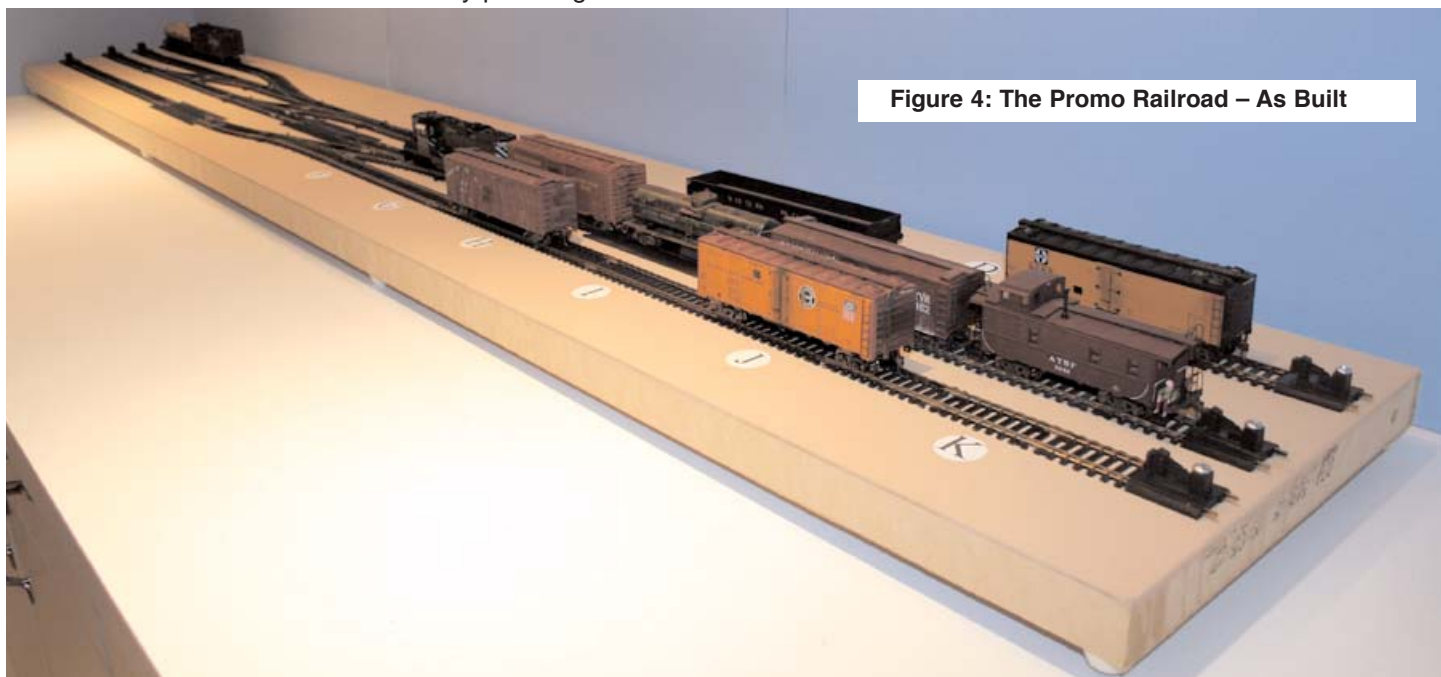


Figure 4: The Promo Railroad - As Built

It's a fact of life that no model railroad ever seems to be constructed exactly as planned. Even with modern track planning software like CADRail, 3rd PlanIt, XTrkCAD, and others; little variations always seem to creep in. Some are due to inadvertent errors. In my case, one error was that I forgot to put in the insulated rail joiners at the west end of Switch No. 8. So I just put them in at the east end of Switch No. 4 instead.

Other variations may be just due to changing preferences. While I used the Peco turnouts as planned, I used Atlas Snap Track instead of Flex Track for the rest of the layout, simply because I had a lot of Snap Track lying around after 55 years in model railroading. And, while I generally glued the track down as planned, I didn't glue down the bumper tracks. I used removable screws instead. During construction, I suddenly realized I could make the Promo Railroad do double duty as a removable part of the staging

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552-1904	Peco LH Code 100 Electrofrog Small Radius Turnout 5 @ 18.98		94.90
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160-647	Bachmann Santa Fe Flyer Train Set, FT Diesel, Hopper, Gondola, Caboose, Power Pack, and Circle of EZ Track		79.98
380-10	Kadee #5 Couplers (10 pair/pkg)		13.98
	Walthers Subtotal		\$334.51
	(no US shipping charges on orders over \$150.00)		
	Walthers only adds sales tax if you live in Wisconsin. the maximum sales tax rate would be 5.60%		16.73
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Weekend Fare (NMRA Member) ___ x \$60.00	Weekend Fare (NMRA Member) ___ x \$75.00	\$
Weekend Fare (Non-Member) ___ x \$70.00	Weekend Fare (Non-Member) ___ x \$85.00	\$
Companion / Family Members ___ x \$25.00	Companion / Family Members ___ x \$25.00	\$
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* Featured Speaker: Indiana Rail Road CEO Thomas Hoback	Total Submitted To CID/NMRA: \$	

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<p>Full Fare, for NMRA members, includes the following . . . Registration packet with name badge, handouts, and official program Access to all clinics, contest rooms, displays, etc. Thursday through Sunday Layout tour booklet <u>One</u> ticket (and early access) to the Train Show at the Marriott on May 5th</p>	\$80.00	\$95.00
<p>Full Fare, for non-NMRA members, includes the following . . . Registration packet with name badge, handouts, and official program Access to all clinics, contest rooms, displays, etc. Thursday through Sunday Layout tour booklet <u>One</u> ticket (and early access) to the Train Show at the Marriott on May 5th <i>Note: This fee does <u>not</u> enroll the MP 50 participant in the NMRA</i></p>	\$90.00	\$105.00
<p>Weekend Fare, for NMRA members, includes the following . . . Registration packet with name badge, handouts, and official program Access to clinics, contest rooms, and displays on Saturday & Sunday Layout tour booklet <u>One</u> ticket (and early access) to the Train Show at the Marriott on May 5th</p>	\$60.00	\$75.00
<p>Weekend Fare, for non-NMRA members, includes the following . . . Registration packet with name badge, handouts, and official program Access to clinics, contest rooms, and displays on Saturday & Sunday Layout tour booklet <u>One</u> ticket (and early access) to the Train Show at the Marriott on May 5th <i>Note: This fee does <u>not</u> enroll the MP 50 participant in the NMRA</i></p>	\$70.00	\$85.00
<p>Spouse / Companion / Family Fare includes the following . . . Note: This one-time fee of \$25.00 covers all immediate family members such as a spouse (companion) and children; the Family Fare must be purchased in conjunction with a Full or Weekend Fare! Full access to clinics, contest rooms, and tours on the MP 50 program Fee <u>does include</u> ticket(s) to the Train Show for each registered party</p>	\$25.00 ONE TIME FEE	\$25.00 ONE TIME FEE
<p>Banquet tickets for the Saturday evening meal and program . . . Individual tickets are required for the meal and featured presentation by Indiana Rail Road CEO Mr. Thomas Hoback. Availability of banquet tickets might be limited for late registrants; purchase tickets as early as possible.</p>	\$25.00 PER TICKET	\$25.00 PER TICKET
<p>Tours to Indiana Rail Road (Thursday) and AMTRAK (Saturday) . . . Drive-it-yourself tours have been arranged to area RR attractions. Reserve space for each tour via the registration form; limited to the first 40 only. Note: Only registered MP 50 attendees may participate in these tours.</p>	FREE LIMIT 40	FREE LIMIT 40

No cash! Make checks payable to: **Central Indiana Division NMRA** Mail to:
 (Please do not staple checks to registration forms!)

MILEPOST 50
Richard Seymour, Registrar
8504 West Thorn Tree
Muncie, IN 47304-8701